

Daily GLOWBUGS

Digest: V1 #59

via AB4EL Web Digests @ SunSITE

Purpose: building and operating vacuum tube-based QRP rigs

[AB4EL Ham Radio Homepage @ SunSITE](#)

%%%% GlowBugs %%%% GlowBugs %%%% GlowBugs %%%% GlowBugs %%%%

Subject: glowbugs V1 #59

glowbugs

Tuesday, June 17 1997

Volume 01 : Number 059

Date: Mon, 16 Jun 1997 10:34:19 -0700 (PDT)

From: Ken Gordon <keng@uidaho.edu>

Subject: Re: Extra CW question...

> copy the standard stuff in a Qso...seemed to go "in" easily. So...I
> sat down and started copying Press and Crypto groups from KPH, KFS and
> NPG. It started to help a bunch, and after a couple months of off and
> on practice I passed the Extra...back when it really was a harder test.

I don't know if there are any stations still doing this, but I used the Navy's VLF CW stations which started about 14 kHz. They ran several megawatts output and I easily copied those in Panama, Maine, Washington State, even Australia, from my QTH in Missoula, Montana. They transmitted 5 letter code groups at up to 35 WPM. Excellent practice.

> to using was concentrating on just what I heard in the cans...and then
> writing it down on the line, but looking just over the top of the line.
> That allowed me to copy the letters, but kept me from trying to read
> the copy. Looking over the letters helps keep them on the line and
> straight, but allowed me to drop the last letter from the brain channel
> and take the next one in.

This is an excellent ideal

>
> Another help is to get to the point where you can copy about 5-7 letters
> behind, holding the string in your head while you bump one letter out at
> a time, allowing your mind to store the next one out of the "Ether".

One help to this is to try to read a book or article while you are copying CW. You will be truly amazed at the accuracy of your copy when you finally accomplish this seemingly impossible feat. This is NOT a joke. I really mean this and was amazed when I started to do it. To do this properly however, you should probably be copying on a typewriter.

> This aids (me anyhow) in concentration, and helps keep copy running
> smoothly. Running behind (and NOT in a state of Panic!) is the sign of
> an experienced operator, and also one that indicates he's in command of

> Morse at that speed.

Indeed this is so. Of course, practice is necessary in order to STAY competent. There are very high-speed CW ops usually on 7030 and 3530. They usually use keyboards and code-readers. I used to QSO them once in a while using my MacElroy bug and my ears. It was very tiring though so I couldn't do it very long, and since I haven't done it for so long, I have lost the touch. Had trouble with some words the other night with K7HLR at 35 wpm.

>

> What got me moving on my Morse was when I "graduated" from just watching
> a Navy circuit at NPD to setting the control Op's posit...handling
> traffic. I quickly became aware of my need to be able to copy at 20
> or so, in a continuous string....sort of a shock to my system until I
> got things rolling. Also, I was copying Landline Morse at work...not
> a bunch, but just enough to really confuse me for a time.

I wanted to become a ship-board radio op. That is why I worked on mine.

>

> I think you're doing well Dave....just keep at it and DONT become at
> all discouraged. Not one of us just woke up one morning and found we
> had the "charm" for higher speed copy....it takes time, but it does come
> to anyone sufficiently dedicated to learning and self-improvement.

Indeed this is also true. Keep up the good work.

>

> Search the HF bands for good, steady Morse practice...K7HLR is a truly
> hard working CW practice station, and he sends some really interesting
> historical plaintext....sorta like reading a book. I sometimes turn
> the rig on and up a bit, and then walk around the house doing my chores
> and being educated on a trip to the Antarctic Pole, from a radioman's
> point of view....neat stuff.

I agree on this wholeheartedly. I really enjoy his text. The other night, he was reading from a book about Thomas Edison and his days as a landline telegrapher. How Tom saved the station-masters son from being killed by a train.

K7HLR is on 7058 kHz. I don't know when he starts, but I always hear him by 0200 gmt. He then runs until at least 0400.

I also wish you the best in your endeavours. Keep it up. You are learning a skill which has applications to many other areas.

Ken W7EKB

Date: Mon, 16 Jun 1997 12:05:56 -0600
From: Jack Harper <jharper@bs2000.com>
Subject: Re: Extra CW question...

At 14:36 6/15/97 -0700, you wrote:

>

>

>Hi gang,

>

><snip>

>My question? Since I am taking the 1(C) code on Tuesday, I have
>been using a code tape (ARRL I believe) and I'm doing awful!
>I find that I only can copy for 20 seconds to 40 seconds
>of 'perfect' copy before I just lose it. This is right at
>20 WPM, using the tape's random goofy words. I just block out
>and it takes a couple of lost words before I get going, but
>even then it's a struggle after the initial bomb-out.

The test will consist of 5-minutes of cw followed by a 10-question 'fill in the blank' test. I predict that if you can copy 20-40 seconds of solid copy at 20wpm that you will easily pass...

I just passed my 20wpm cw test for the Extra about a month ago (only took 30-years :)

I bought for \$30 or so a very nice computer program from a Brit over the Internet called 'NuMorse' that was of tremendous help -- this thing runs on Windows et. al. and works well. It will send random code groups and 'QSO' text at varying speeds.

I worked with the thing about every day for about six weeks before I took the test. Before I started working with the program, I was comfortable at about 16-wpm or so on the air -- so I set the character speed at 25 wpm and set the text speed at 16 and then when I could copy 80% of random text then I would bump the text speed up another wpm (16, 17, 18,... -- but with the individual characters coming out at 25 wpm). After I got to 22 wpm (80% copy), then I felt that I was ready for the test.

I learned a couple of things:

(a) Receiving random text is very very different from 'qso' text -- at the test I discovered this as I immediately began to think about the text rather than just copy the stuff... Almost caused me to fail -- I finally figured out to give in to my impulses and very carefully copy things that clearly might be on the test -- names, wx, rig, antenna ("My antenna is a 40m dipole" etc). So I guess that my point is it is probably better to practice using real 'qso' text rather than random groups.

(b) Oddly enough, it really threw me when I *Slowed* the character speed down after I reached 22 wpm with 25 wpm characters -- what I did not realize is that with 25 wpm characters running with 22 wpm (or whatever) text, there is a clear pause between the characters -- which completely disappears with 22 wpm characters and 22 wpm text -- suddenly it was just a blizzard of stuff. So, in my view, it is probably best to practice with 22 wpm text and build your speed up to 22 wpm text (all this 25 wpm characters and 22 wpm text etc is the so-called "Farnsworth" method -- which I think I pushed a bit too far).

(c) For some reason, I found that I very easily discovered that I could *type* the characters a whole lot better than I could write them in longhand -- I find this very strange -- and it was quite interesting to watch my brain (what's left of it) catch on to this method -- I now hear .- and don't so much think 'a' but feel where I should type the key on the keyboard --very weird indeed. You might try it and see what happens (I am, BTW, a two-fingered typist).

(d) I also discovered that practice with tapes was hopeless for me -- don't know why -- but a computer spitting the stuff out seemed to hold my attention much better.

I hope that the above helps. I, of course, had the jitters at the actual

test -- did not help that I brought my laptop for typing and so kind of stood out from the crowd a bit (there were only 3 of us taking the 20). Then the plaintext threw me for a bit until I figured out to just go with it and to concentrate on the 'interesting' stuff (names etc).

One *big* thing -- bring a set of earphones and try to get the examiner to let you use them -- makes an enormous difference (I ended up hanging around and letting the two other guys borrow mine for their individual tests -- and the examiners were great and very accommodating in allowing that).

>

>So now I'm really concerned about the test. Surely a number of
>the group have taken it. What's the copy typically like?

I suggest that you go in with the attitude that "I am going to do my best to pass the thing -- but I bet that I might fail due to the jitters etc -- I will think of my first attempt as really a practice try just to see what it's like" -- oddly enough, I actually passed.

The text consists of a 'typical' qso that starts with a callsign de another callsign (one question on the test which is 'fill in the blank' *will* be "what is the call sign of the transmitting (or receiving) station?" -- other questions that I encountered -- "what is the name of the receiving operator?" "What is the weather at the transmitting station?" "What is the qth of the receiver?" "What is the antenna/rig/occupation etc etc et of the rx/tx station ad nauseam...

So, the 'game' to be played is to concentrate on names, call signs, rigs etc -- so much of the stuff you will copy in your head ("name is" -. .- - -- . etc -- right) -- write down the name etc etc. I wrote down everything that I could and then managed to piece a few things together when I was actually 'filling in the blanks' after the cw transmission ended - -- found 'yaesu' floating around -- guessed that was the answer to "What is the Rig?" etc.

I agree with your view that the tests have been 'dumbed down' (my words -- not yours) over the years. I recall when I passed the Advanced back in 1969 that I had to have, I think, one minute of solid copy at 13wpm. I must admit that there is no way that I can do 1-minute of solid copy of 20 wpm code -- 90% yes -- but 100% -- I don't think so.

><snip>

>Thanks for any help,

Best of Luck -- and believe me if I can pass the 20 wpm test so can you!

>

>100%-Boatanchors/Glowbug-shack 73's

>

>Dave WB7AWK (hope to soon be Extra...)

>

>

Hopefully I will pass the written part within the next month (light a candle for me!)

Regards

Jack, KC0LR (Friend to all things Hammarlund)

Interesting you should mention this...I used Numorse as well (to get my =
extra about a year ago) and find that without my keyboard my copy really =
falls apart.

In fact I used my laptop in the exam and had the battery go dead before =
I could transcribe the copy to paper as required by the examiners. I =
had to take that nerve racking test twice :-{(=20

I also have problems copying in my head and wonder if this is anyway =
tied to my dependence on the computer keyboard. I probably run a =
little fast for my capabilities (25-30wpm) as I am trying to improve. I =
am a little spoiled in that my Dad (a ham for about 40 years) is my =
constant companion on the air and he can copy just about anything at any =
speed (in his head).

I am a little frustrated that I cannot seem to copy very well in my =
head. I am not sure if it is the "keyboard syndrome" or just a lack of =
brains ;-()

73

Guy AC5HL

Date: Tue, 17 Jun 1997 12:22:41 -0400 (EDT)

From: leeboo@ct.net (Leon Wiltsey)

Subject: tube orders

>To:gb

>From: leeboo@ct.net (Leon Wiltsey)

>Subject: tube orders

>Cc:

>Bcc:

>X-Attachments:

>

> Hi gang

>am back from my mini vacation, have finished tube inventory

>and will try to get you what you need. Went thru over 2000 tubes

>most old tv types, but did come across some sweep tubes and a

>fair amount of comm tubes. If you need any send me a llist.

>too many types for me to list. Most are new old stock in ooriginal

>boxes and going for pre 1993 prices. Am doing a favor for an

>old man who has given me many part for my gb projects.

>

THANK THE LORD FOR ALL YOU HAVE

68 yr old semidisabled senior

(stroke got my balance & hand to eye coordination)

ham agn as KF4RCL TECK+ (MUCH HAPPINESS)

BUILD MOST OF MY STATION EQUIP

SUB.BA & GB-- NO SOLID STATE

Leon B Wiltsey (Lee)

4600 Lake Haven BLVD.

Sebring, Fl. 33872

SEBRING FL. WHERE THERE IS NO QRM

FROM ANYTHING LOCAL

Date: Tue, 17 Jun 97 13:39:41 EDT

From: jkh@lexis-nexis.com (John Heck)

Subject: Fessenden Receiver

Folks,

A nice little book for glowbuggers is "The How and Why of Radio Apparatus" by W.E. Secore, Experimenter Publishing Co., 1922. This is a fairly exhaustive survey of the current state of component technology as it existed in 1922. A lot of insight can be gained from this little book into the evolution of the kind of equipment that the glowbug type is trying to work with today. This book is available as a reprint from Lindsay Publications, and I advise you to get a copy before Lindsay drops it from his list. Antique Electronic Supply also carries many of the Lindsay titles and may have this one as well. The reason I mention this book is because of a description of what was known as the "Fessendon Heterodyne" receiver. By receiver, in this case, is meant what we know as a headset. More designs of headset were around, in those days, than I would have imagined, and this one has unique characteristics which make it pretty interesting. It has two sets of coils, one set wound on a single pole piece, and the other fixed on the diaphragm and concentric with the stationary one. The coil on the diaphragm is connected to a tuned RF receiving circuit, and the stationary coil is connected to a local oscillator. When the beat frequency is audible, and possibly even close to the resonant frequency of the diaphragm, the beat note will be clearly audible. No discussion of the uses of this particular device is given in Secore's book but it seems to me that this would allow for AM and CW reception without the use of a detector, only a tuned RF circuit being necessary, as a minimum requirement, and RF amplification as necessary. All the AF amplification would be mechanical amplification by the headset. Now, this device would not have been possible without a stable and tunable source of local oscillation, which implies the necessity for a vacuum tube circuit, so it would not have been useful in a purely passive circuit, but it does seem worthy of a little investigation. I would think that something like this could be made up from an old headset.

I just wanted to open up a little discussion, if this sort of old stuff interests this group!

Regards,
John Heck, KC8ETS
1009 Donson Drive
Dayton, Ohio 45429
(937)865-7036(work)
jkh@lexis-nexis.com

End of glowbugs V1 #59

%%%% GlowBugs %%%% GlowBugs %%%% GlowBugs %%%% GlowBugs %%%%

[AB4EL Ham Radio Homepage @ SunSITE](#)

Created by **Steve Modena, AB4EL**
Comments and suggestions to modena@SunSITE.unc.edu
